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RUEAHLH/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 0187  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHRMAKS/COMUSNAVCENT PRIORITY  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
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RUCPDOH/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 002476

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NEA FOR DAS GGRAY  
DEPT OF ENERGY PASS TO A/S KKOLEVAR, A/S KHARBERT, AND  
M WILLIAMSON  
S/CT FOR GFEIERSTEIN AND BAVERILL  
DS/ATA FOR KMALLOY  
TREASURY PASS TO A/S CLOWERY  
DHS PASS TO TWARRICK AND DGRANT  
CIA PASS TO TCOYNE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2017  
TAGS: [KCIP](#) [EPET](#) [ENERG](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [SA](#)  
SUBJECT: MOI DISCUSSES DE-RADICALIZATION PROGRAMS DURING  
INTERAGENCY VISIT

REF: RIYADH 2474

Classified By: DCM Michael Gfoeller for reasons 1.4  
(b) (c) and (d).

11. This cable has been cleared by S/CT Deputy Coordinator  
Feierstein.

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Summary  
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12. (C) During a December 3-5 Interagency visit (ref A) to  
discuss greater USG cooperation with the Ministry of Interior  
(MOI) on its modernization drive, Dr. Hadleg, Director of the  
MOI's Radical Ideology Department, made a presentation to the  
delegation on the SAG's approach to de-radicalization of  
Saudi extremists and the War of Ideas. He highlighted the  
program's efforts to re-integrate participants into  
mainstream Saudi society, ensuring they will forfeit  
substantial social and economic benefits if they returns to  
radicalism. The MOI claims an 88 to 90 percent success rate  
in rehabilitating extremists, while cautioning there are "no  
guarantees." MOI Major General Dr. Saad Al-Jabri noted he  
hoped the MOI might host a "best practices" conference in the  
area of de-radicalization, perhaps in the spring.

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Program Based on Research Findings  
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13. (C) Dr. Hadleg overviewed the SAG's programs to  
rehabilitate young and impressionable recruits who had been  
employed by Islamic extremists, noting the SAG believed the  
"hard approach" is not the only approach to fighting  
extremism in society. Dr. Hadleg described the extensive  
studies MOI has carried out on those recruited into extremist  
groups, and explained the structure of its de-radicalization

program was based on its findings. The MOI had identified a few key features of those recruited by extremist organizations: most were middle class or wealthier, late teens to early twenties, and at least high-school educated. As Saudi Arabia increasingly cracks down on extremist preaching in mosques in public, most were recruited on the internet.

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MOI's De-Radicalization Program Structure;  
Give Them Something to Lose  
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¶4. (C) Dr. Hadleg highlighted some of the key features of the SAG's de-radicalization program: detainees under this program are not mixed with the general prison population of hardened criminals, but kept separate. The program emphasizes outreach by imams to show extremists the errors in their religious judgments and interpretations of the Koran. Outreach by social workers, psychologists, and respected members of society are also part of the program. The program features structured group discussion sessions in the morning, followed by sports and outdoor activities in the afternoon, with religious instruction in the evening. For those who "graduate" successfully into re-integration into society, the MOI offers assistance with employment, marriage, and housing. Dr. Hadleg also detailed the outreach to the detainees' tribes and families, with whom the MOI works closely to ensure participants do not return to an extremist path. Each step of the program is designed to tightly bind the participant into mainstream Saudi society, and ensure he will forfeit substantial social and economic benefits if he returns to radicalism. He specifically noted that

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participants are encouraged to marry, have children, and seek employment or further education.

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MOI claims an 88 to 90% Success Rate,  
But There are no Guarantees  
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¶5. (C) The MOI claims an 88 to 90 percent success rate in rehabilitating extremists who pass through their program, but Dr. Hadleg offered careful caveats, noting "there are no guarantees." He indicated the man who carried out the bombing attacked on the MOI building in 2004 had participated in the rehabilitation program. More optimistically, he noted that the Guantanamo returnees had demonstrated no mis-conduct to date. Dr. Hadleg clarified that merely participating in the program did not automatically entitle a prisoner to release. Generally, those determined to be ringleaders will not be eligible for release.

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Reaching Out to Other Nations for  
"Best Practices" in De-Radicalization  
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¶6. (C) NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary Gray asked if the SAG has shared information or best practices with other countries, such as Egypt, which has an active de-radicalization program. Dr. Al-Jabri responded that he would welcome the opportunity to host a workshop or forum on de-radicalization initiatives, perhaps in the spring, for affected countries in both the Arab world and the west, to share experiences and best practices. S/CT Deputy Coordinator Feierstein noted that there was broad recognition that Saudi Arabia was a leader in de-radicalization initiatives, with Morocco being another example in the Near East region of a government with a successful program.

¶7. (C) In discussing the propensity for violence in rapidly modernizing societies, Dr. Hadlag remarked that, "Saudi

Arabia is different because it is based on Islam, and we are modernizing in a gradual way so that we do not have the same social problems." Dr. Al-Jabri stated that "Saudi Arabia has always been a conservative society, but not a violent one." He went on to explain the religious roots of Wahabism, which emphasize that even though you may dis-agree with the government, you do not have the right to attack it.

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